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Harp of the Heart

by Charles Cke Woods



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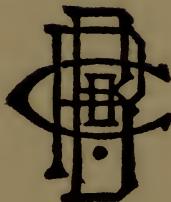
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A HARP OF THE HEART

BY
CHARLES COKE WOODS

II



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By
CHARLES COKE WOODS

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TO

MR. M. L. WOY,

In Memory of Martha Elizabeth Woy.



Wondrous scenes of beauty came
Across the years to me;
Would I could find some brush of flame
And paint them all for thee.

Wondrous music flowed along
On singing winds to me;
Would I could catch it in my song,
And sing it all to thee.

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GOD'S GOOD-NIGHT KISS.

She walked with God, or in the sun or rain,
And when her time was come to leave,
She gave no sign of mortal pain,—
On that near night to Christmas eve.

She faced earth's frowns with faith's unfailing
smile
That drove the clouds from all our skies;
As free as sunlight is from guile,
Was she, with clear, untarnished eyes.

Her voice in speech was always music sweet,
And swift her feet to follow pain
Until arrived at grief's retreat,—
She hushed all sobs with love's refrain.

Then in the evening dusk the kiss of God
Fell on her brow, as soft and still
As dew-fall finds the flowering sod,—
And all is well that is God's will.

And now she lives that glad, unaging life,
Beyond the blinding touch of tears,
Beyond the struggle and the strife,—
With joy that knows no ending years.

SINGING OF THE SOUL.

A HARP OF THE HEART

'A DREAM AT DAWN.

A Stranger took my hand in his,
And at the dawn-time stood with me
High on a mountain's wind-washed brow,
And said, with speaking gesture, "See
All life, and its full meaning now."

I saw unrolled a wondrous scroll,
And wistful strove to read its page;
I gazed and wordless grew with awe,
Nor did the sight my pain assuage;—
The Stranger said, "Child, this is Law."

A chieftain then in armor clad,
Stood giant tall behind the scroll,
Impatient, waiting for his hour,
With tyrant's heel to crush man's soul;—
The Stranger said: "Child, this is Power."

Hard by the chieftain stood a queen,
Too finely fair for speech to name,
And at her feet unmeasured booty,
And world-wide was her fadeless fame;—
The Stranger said: "Child, this is Beauty."

A HARP OF THE HEART

Engirt with Beauty, Law, and Power,
Came One whose worth surpassed them all;
Like rain of gold, light from above
On her fair face did gently fall;—
The Stranger said: "Child, this is LOVE."



SOME OF THESE DAYS.

Some of these days the shadows will shift
From the face of the sky, and the fogs will lift,
And peace will bloom in paths of pain,
As flowers come blossoming after the rain,—
Some of these days.

Some of these days the burthen will fall,
And sweet thro' the dark a Voice will call,
Luring away from the lowering night
Into a day of uncloudening light,—
Some of these days.

Some of these days our work will change,
And widen to reaches of infinite range;
The finest of deeds we meant to do,
And the sweetest of dreams will come full true,—
Some of these days.

Some of these days a Hand in the gloam
Will beckon away to a radiant home;
And as gleeful groups when school is out
We'll gladsome go with joyous shout,—
Some of these days.

A HARP OF THE HEART

HIS PRESENCE.

Some One attends this pilgrim way,
And treads each path with me,
He meets my wondrous need each day
With wondrous ministry ;
His presence doth my soul engage,
Whose power upholds the earth,
Who guides all worlds from age to age,
And every life from birth.

In softened tones He speaks to me,
His hand's in easy reach,
My glad heart knows this mystery
Which passes human speech ;
Transcending all material forms,
Yet throbbing in each mote,
His music sounds thro' hurtling storms,
And in the zephyr's note.

A HARP OF THE HEART

THE CONQUEROR'S CREED.

The storm's swift wings belong to God,
 He folds them when He will;
He speaks along the thunder's voice,
 And bids the din be still;
His lips of love shall drink the dark
 From every bitter night,
And all my clouded space shall fill
 With His unclouded light.

No dreams of good are aught too good
 Some day to come full true;
The largest hope is nearest right,
 God's upper skies are blue;
All dark despairs shall turn to hope,
 All sabbings into song,
For God and good still hold the throne,
 And right shall conquer wrong.



IF WILD POPPIES BLOW.

What matter if wild poppies blow
 Above my sleeping dust;
Or brief my years, or long, if so
 I have been true and just;
I care not where my dust may lie,
 Or in the field or wood,
If only all who pass me by
 Have known that I was good.

A HARP OF THE HEART

THE CROWNS.

The reckoning day had come at last,
The coronation day;
The years of earthly life had passed,
Nor could I longer stay;
I saw the mighty King of Love,
And heard his gentle word—
The estimates of life above,
And His awards I heard.

Ten thousand glowing crowns I saw,
Set full of shining stars;
Nor in one crown was found a flaw,
As earthly blemish mars;
I wondered whose the shining ones,
And whose the crowns less bright;
I said: "The brightest are for sons
That flash in fame's high light."

Then bowed the King above the head
Of one with pallid face;
And as He crowned this one He said,
"His life was full of grace;"
But in the halls of earthly fame
No man could find a shred
Of that immortal hero's name,
Nor one great word he said.

He was an invalid in pain
For many weary years,

A HARP OF THE HEART

Who kept his spirit free from stain,
And free from fretting fears;
But from his bed of suffering came
Brave words that cheered the throng;
His love life burned with ceaseless flame,
And ceaseless was his song.

And then a dwarf with humble mien
Received a shining crown;
He scarce on earth was ever seen,—
A stranger to renown;
No flaming torch he held aloft,—
His was a modest light;
At his small work the haughty scoffed,
And kept him out of sight.

But when God's light uncovered all,
On the great reckoning day,
That dwarf stood tallest of the tall,
And bore his crown away;—
A crown thick-set with shining stars
Was placed upon his head,
For not one flaw his manhood mars,
Nor spoils one word he said.

In handing out each soul's reward
No heed was paid to fame;
'Twas real worth that pleased the Lord,
Despite men's praise or blame;
Mere gifts of genius counted naught
In that perfect assize,
'Twas seen that wealth no crown had bought,
But goodness won the prize.

A HARP OF THE HEART

FOREGLEAMS.

We spread palm leaves beneath Thy feet,
Resplendent Prince of Light;
Against our night Thy sunbeams beat,
And darkness takes to flight.

From seed we sow in sorrow's rain,
Amid the tempest's din,
We'll bring bright sheaves from fields of pain,
Where angels' feet have been.

Field lilies fill footprints of frost,
When snowdrifts melt away;
And love-lit faces we have lost
God will give back some day.

Earth's tombs are draped with living blooms
From seeds Thy hands have sown;
Thy quenchless light gleams thro' our glooms,
And hushes all our moan.

A HARP OF THE HEART

"THE CLEARING."

Among tall trees I walked in evening gloam,
And for a little space saw not the path;
The dismal owls called thro' the dark, and winds
Made moan as some spent pilgrim racked with pain;
Then suddenly I found with sweet surprise
That in "the clearing" I had come, and stood
Assured and unafraid at my own door;
Thus will it be some gladsome time, when thro'
The tangled dark my stumbling feet have come,
And with my Father safe arrived at home.



A NIGHT SONG.

Dumb with dread my faltering feet
Stand still upon the verge
Of stormy seas whose billows beat
My dead hope's funeral dirge.

Is there no Father's hand to take
The hand outstretched to Him?
Shall prayer but empty echoes wake
Among the sea-fogs dim?

Oh, answer, God, speak back to me
Across this reach of night;
Touch my slow eyes and let them see
The coming of the light.

A HARP OF THE HEART

LEES OF LIFE.

From chalices of languid life,
I drain the bitter lees,
And all the music left to me
Sobs out from broken keys;

The glad song bird of hope is hushed,
A-droop with weary wing,
Nor can the angel of the dawn
Coax her sad heart to sing.

But fruit was never ripened yet,
Without the storm and rain,
And all life's brightest sheaves are gleaned
With keenest blades of pain;

Mayhap all grief and grim despair,
Like frost and ice and snow
Will turn to good when God's sunshine
Shall make them melt and flow.

A HARP OF THE HEART

MIRACLES.

Miracles are wrought to-day—
There are so many now
That many men forget to pay
The deferential bow
To Him who only hath the skill
To do the unmatched deed,
Of working out His wondrous will,
In mind of man or weed.

I hold “The Sign” to be such thing
As none but God can do,
Or be it wrought in floods of spring,
Or in a drop of dew;
In “wonders” of the grape and wheat,
Full ripe in His sunshine,
I find interpretation meet,
Of those in Palestine.

God changes water into wine,
In vineyards, I allow;
And where His heavy harvests shine,
He makes the “Manna” now;
His methods may be otherwise—
(God’s modes are manifold)—
Than under Palestinian skies,
In those dear days of old.

A HARP OF THE HEART

What matter, if He work His will?—
For only that is good,
Or in the vale, or on the hill,
Or in the field, or wood;
God's will thro' nature's pulses flows,
In human kind, or tree,
His works are greater now than those
He wrought in Galilee.



CREEDS.

Pagan crumbs in human creeds
Hold much of error's bane,
Nor do they meet my outer needs,
Nor soothe my inner pain;
How helps it me to know the path
Where runneth mercy's feet,
If Love's lips drain no cups of wrath,
Nor make life's bitter sweet.

Traditions hoary with the past,
No longer solace me,
By fickle fancy they were cast
In Mind's sweet infancy;
Too real is life to stand on dreams,
Or fables well devised;
All Truth is greater than it seems,
Nor long can be disguised.

A HARP OF THE HEART

The creed that shows the heart of God
With less of love than mine,
Is only dust from earthly clod,
And ne'er could be divine;
That creed and Christ are far apart,
Like desert sand and sea,
It shows man's error-blinded heart,
But, God, it shows not Thee.



THE RETURN OF TRUTH.

Seaward far the billows heaved,
And left me on the sand;
Had my own eyes my soul deceived,
Did I not understand
That with the tide the Truth had gone,
And left me lost and lone—
That never more sweet day would dawn,
But night winds aye would moan?

I only lay affrighted there,
Wreck-drift upon the shore,
And breathed a prayer choked with despair,
For Truth's return once more;
The tide had rolled afar from land,
And left a weary waste,
Where wrecks and ruins strewed the strand—
And Truth could not be traced.

A HARP OF THE HEART

Her glowing face had gone away,
 Her flaming feet had fled,
I faintly sobbed, but could not pray—
 For TRUTH or *I* was dead;
But like the rush of waters wild,
 Or floods of falling rain,
The tide came back in billows piled,
 And Truth returned again.

Truth ne'er had died, but I was dead,
 Cloud-veiled were all the stars;
And Hope on muffled feet had fled
 Across the ocean bars;
But when the tide returned again,
 My spirit mewed her youth,
For walking on the widening main,
 With proffered hands came Truth.



MY SHEPHERD.

Over the braes with bleeding feet,
 My Shepherd sought for me,
Through blinding rain and stinging sleet
 That hurtled across the lea.

From sheltering fold I wandered far,
 And groped amid the gloam;
Night reft the skies of every star,
 And me of friends and home.

A HARP OF THE HEART

But when my Shepherd's voice rang clear
Through night's bewildering black,
That music soothed away my fear,
And brought the morning back.

I called Him near with pleading cry,
And with His pitying palm
He stroked the teardrops from my eye,
And loved my soul to calm.

He drives away the wolves of ills,
As Shepherds did of old,
And on life's winter-beaten hills
His bosom is my fold.



THE MASTER.

So true is the Master who rules in the earth,
That no giant evil can come to the birth,
But some mighty good springs forth full grown,—
Seizes a sceptre and climbs to a throne,
Makes servants of evils, helps truth to the goal;—
So strong is the Master who rules in the soul.

A HARP OF THE HEART

A SOLDIER PRAYER.

Take not away my chance of life,
Nor ease me of my task,
Nor grant me furlough from the strife,
Nor save from scars, I ask;
But make me bravest of the brave,
Unswerving, strong, and true,
And when my comrades dig my grave,
Say this, "A fair fight through."



FRIEND.

I would empty thy chalice of heartache and pain,
Would freshen thy desert with flowers and rain,
Would draw out the bitter and pour in the sweet,
And pluck every thorn from the way of thy feet;—
I would sing in the gladness of summer and bloom,
And sing out the sadness of winter and gloom;
Would lessen thy load by enlarging thy life,
I would sing back repose and would sing away
strife.

A HARP OF THE HEART

THE INVISIBLE WEAVER.

Behind the warp and woof of things,
The unseen Weaver stands;
And from His hand the thread He flings
That makes the mystic strands.

The tangled skeins unsightly seem,
Ere passed through His sure loom;
But woven in the warp they gleam
Like beauty in a bloom.

Bright threads of weal are spun from woe,
And night-black threads come white,
When from His flawless spindles flow
The finished robes of right.



FORWARD.

I face the wind,
I front the storm,
Nor quail, nor faint, nor backward turn;
But up the steeps
With truth-shod feet—
God made me not to fear or fail;
I climb and stand
Above the storm
Where clouds forever fall away.

A HARP OF THE HEART

A JOURNEY WITH MY SOUL.

A journey with my soul I went,
Among earth's thrones and crowns,
To find full measure of content,
In country place or towns.

The highest mountain tops I scaled,
And searched the deepest vales;
On seas each passing ship I hailed,
And yet contentment fails.

I gathered gold from many mines,
And pearls from many seas;
I drank from cups of mingled wines,
And drained them to the lees.

In every land I worshiped Art,
And bowed at Beauty's shrine;
But not in studio or mart
Found I the thing divine.

Like some lost bee far from the hive,—
Wing strength all gone to waste,
I find my spirit scarce alive,
In bloomless deserts placed.

Content dwells not in some far star,
Nor on some distant strand;
But duty brings it where we are,
On any seas or land.

A HARP OF THE HEART

VIA DOLOROSA.

The upward sloping path to power has crimson stain,
Drawn from lacerated feet that tread on pain,
And press their way through battling winds that smite them sore,
Till they have borne the soul above the storm's uproar.

I thought to climb the steeps of strength by rugged roads,
And on my Titan thews bear other Pilgrims' loads.
But now through vales fog-choked and chill, bereft of day,
I find myself a wayfarer strayed from the way.

The set and stress of brawn and brain and my soul's might
Have been to reach the glowing goal of manhood's height,
And then to stand aloft and lift and draw men there,
Where to glad sceptred souls comes no touch of despair.

The long-locked secret's soul asserts itself at last;
I half suspected years agone that when youth past
I should wake up some day where stinging frost winds blow,
And, startled, find myself unclothed mid wilds of woe.

A HARP OF THE HEART

I grope among Divine *débris* and feel for One
Amid the wreck,—whose face eclipses noon-day sun,
And whose voice speaks across the anguish of my
years,—
Whose lips drain dry the chalice of my grief and
fears.

My heart and flesh and my high dreams have failed,
But like a witless bird on some sharp thorn im-
paled,—
Whose life in crimson drops falls back to mother
sod,—
Thus my spent soul drops in the open palms of God.



THE TOUCHES OF HIS HANDS.

I lean not on my earthly lot,
 But on Him whom I know,
Whose unforgetting love hath not
 Forgot the way I go;
And when His love-toned voice I hear,
 And touch His healing hand,
The darkest skies of life come clear,
 Above earth's shadow-land;
He walks the highways of the storm,
 In stillest air He stands,
I feel in climates cold and warm
 The touches of His hands;
And if He call me in the night,
 Or at the tide of noon,

A HARP OF THE HEART

Or when the evening star is bright,
 Or when the mystic moon
Is raining soft her silvery sheen
 Across night's open door,—
Where still the shadows' watch—I ween
 My Friend shall come once more,
(Whose face at night I oft have seen)
 And, leading on before,
His gentle hand shall safely screen
 These eyes unused to waneless lights,
That gleam beyond the land of nights.



THE ARTIST'S DREAM.

Long the yearning artist hunted
 For a block of sandal-wood,
From the which his skill might chisel
 The Madonna great and good.

But the quest seemed wholly useless,
 And despair stood at the door;
Must he see his vision vanish,
 Nor return forevermore?

'Angel Hope came in the night-time,
 Spreading splendor in her trail,
Speaking thus with inspiration,—
 "Up, my Hero, never fail."

A HARP OF THE HEART.

Then the genius seized the oak wood,
Sleeping at the fireside,
And from that carved the Madonna
Which became the wide world's pride.

Thus it is that masterpieces
Which the dreamer would prepare,
Hide among the commonplaces
That surround us everywhere.



THY HAND.

Thy Hand, Thy Hand, great Friend, Thy Hand—
The daylight fades, nor in the sky
Is seen one star to show the way
Thro' tangled thickets of the dark;
The sea tides lift, and weary waves
Fall heavy on the sodden sand,
And, sobbing at my feet, they die.
The moon in mist is wholly hid
Beyond the lonely night-clad hills;
My ships are all far out at sea—
Great ships of Faith and Hope and Love;
Ah, what if they should ne'er return?
Thy Hand, Thy Hand, great Guide, Thy Hand,
To steer my lonely little barque
Around the rocks where breakers beat
Themselves to fury and to foam—
O, Master of all storms and seas,
Till to my harbor home I come,
My Pilot Lord, Thy Hand, Thy Hand.

A HARP OF THE HEART

LOVE.

Love hath eyes that see the deepest secrets shadows hold,
Yet eyes that see in deepest dark the faintest gleams of gold;
And love climbs steeps and spills life's blood in every track—
Nor in the face of death or doom will love turn back.

FIRESIDE SONGS.

A HARP OF THE HEART

"ARE ALL THE CHILDREN IN?"

Life's lamp was burning low,
When a mother asked to know,
If the midnight had been passed,
And life's journey done at last,—
Asked once more in whispers thin:
"Are all the children in?"

*O the winds are cold and wild,
Chilling many a hapless child,
Lambs have wandered from the fold,
In the stormy night and cold;
Who will search the shadows black,
And help the Shepherd bring them back?*

"Are all the children in?"
From the prowling wolves of sin,
From the place where dancing death
Breathes o'er all his blighting breath,
And crouching sets his secret ginn—
"Are all the children in?"

*O the winds are cold and wild,
Chilling many a hapless child,
Lambs have wandered from the fold,
In the stormy night and cold;
Who will search the shadows black,
'And help the Shepherd bring them back?*

A HARP OF THE HEART

“Are all the children in?”
From the starless night of sin,
Where the winds their revels hold,
With swirling snow and killing cold,
And hunger shivers gaunt and thin—
“Are all the children in?”

*O the winds are cold and wild,
Chilling many a hapless child,
Lambs have wandered from the fold,
In the stormy night and cold;
Who will search the shadows black,
And help the Shepherd bring them back?*



WORDS.

If words were daggers, would we thrust
Them, as we often do,
Into hearts of those we love,
And smite them through and through?

If words were arrows poison-tipped,
Then would we bend the bow,
And let them fly so recklessly,
Unheeding where they go?

If words were things that bruise and maim,
And lacerate and slay,
Like blades and bludgeons that men make
For brutal battle play,—

A HARP OF THE HEART

How greatly guarded we should be
Of every swift-winged word,
And oft would many a healing speech
From our lips be heard.



HER WHITE HANDS.

From children's faces soiled at play
Those pure white hands had washed away
The grime, and gentle words of cheer
Had soothed away each childish fear.

As white as the lips of the lily's mouth,
When soft winds blow from the summer south,
Unmoving at her side they lay,
A-dream in the light of the dawning day.

As crystal clean as the purest rain,
Dear hands that knew no sinful stain,
How oft they bore another's load,
While from their whiteness music flowed.

I saw One come at morning light,
And touch those hands so still and white—
“With Me, My Daughter, come,” He said,
And death, defeated, swiftly fled.

A HARP OF THE HEART

IN THE OLD CABIN DOOR.

Beaten and battered by the storms of the years,
Hushed is the crying and dried are the tears;
All laughter and frolic have fled long ago,
And the mossed roof is covered with silence and
snow;
But still I can see in the old cabin door,
One waiting my call as in glad days of yore;
It is Mother's love watch in the gloaming for me,
As I home with the kine from the rain-swept lea;
But Mother now waits in the Palace of Light,
And beckons me in from the storm and the night.



PLAYMATES.

Blithe lad of my boyhood days, it seems but yester-morn,
When barefoot brothers you and I played in the
blooming corn;
The tassels were adrip with dew, the long leaves
moist and green,
And while the soldier stalks stood guard we romped
the rows between;
Our hearts were flush as dewy dawn and so o'erfull
with weal,
That we forgot our pledged return to share the
morning meal;

A HARP OF THE HEART

Sweet tyranny of sportive mood held us in happy thrall,
Till Mother's voice rang through the corn and gave the breakfast call.
On other days we strolled afield through grass and leafy frond,
Far rambling till we came upon the iris-circled pond
That slumbered in sweet Summer's arms as still as infant's sleep;
So glassy clear the waters lay like sunshine in a heap,
That in we forded to the thigh on moss as velvet soft
As any fabric spun from down that rarest birds have doffed,
The dreamy waters slipped about our feet as soft as oil,
And all the world seemed built for play with ne'er a spot for toil;
A lifetime's joys were focused there in those glad summer hours,
When busy bees hummed at their task among the iris flowers.
My playmate lad spoke soft and said, "This time will soon be past,
Youth flies on wings of wondrous speed, nor can its play time last;"
That solemn word broke rapture's spell, and wading to the edge,
We filled our hats to running o'er with iris bloom and sedge;

A HARP OF THE HEART

Then trudging back our weary way along the shaded roads,
We brought us home where Mother watched and took our fragrant loads.
Playmate of mine, my heart upheaves with grief in place of joys,
As I recall those halcyon days when you and I were boys;
For when I walk across the fields and o'er the meadows roam,
I look to see you coming back—you've been so long from home;
But yesternight I called for you, 'twas in a mocking dream,
Arm-locked again you walked with me along the laughing stream;
And just as in the days of yore the merry wood birds sang,
Where cattle grazed, and gentle sheep, and good old cowbells rang;
The black haw blooms fell at our feet like fragrant flakes of snow,
And Spring's warm breath blew far away the chill of Winter's woe;
The comely boughs of redbud trees with crimson robes were dressed,
And many a bird with sweet love song wooed his coy mate to nest;
The aromatic plumules fed the honey-hunting bee,
While every sight and every sound enhanced the jubilee;

A HARP OF THE HEART

The soft May winds with viewless lips and unseen
kisses came,
And soothed us with that sense of peace which ne'er
has found a name.
From sun to sun the hours were glad and ever full
with mirth,
When youth with wondrous genius made a play-
ground of the earth;
The light that swathed our pathway then streamed
down from smiling skies,
No clouds had risen to shade our hearts, nor grief
to blind our eyes;
Some tears had frolicked on our cheeks like playful
drops of rain,
But that was Mother Nature's way to save from
stress and strain;
No floods that surge like fiery tides from flaming
furnace blasts
Had ever scorched our scarless hearts with name-
less pain that lasts
And burns its way through troubled years, consum-
ing every joy,—
Such fires the woe-worn man may know, but not
the play-worn boy.
Full draughts of love we quaffed that day from na-
ture's brimming bowl,
And God's good hand with gentle touch close knit
us soul to soul;
Weary at length in sportive quest for blossoms in
the bog,
We sat us down to rest awhile upon a moss-grown
log,—

A HARP OF THE HEART

Then quick as light it came to me, "The lad has
been away,"
But when he knew my heart would break, should
he prolong his stay,
He hastened back to meet me there, and hug up to
my side,
O laughing lad, in that dear dream I thought thou
hadst not died!
With sudden start I quick awoke and gazed about
my room,
And heard the moaning winds without that filled
the night with gloom;
No happy chum was there with me, no one was at
my side,—
Such taunting dreams rebreak my heart since my
dear Playmate died;
Would God that life were like that dream and he
were still with me,
Then all undaunted would we ride life's weather-
beaten sea;
But heartbreak finds a balm at last and hope sings
once again,
For as I walk the wave-washed sands beside the
moaning main,
The music of my Playmate's call sounds sweet
across the sea,—
From happy hills all summer-crowned beyond
death's mystery.

A HARP OF THE HEART

THE BABY AND THE MOON.

High swung in evening sky,
I saw a silver rim;
My baby asked me why
"The dear moon looked so dim."

I told the little lad
That all the moon was there,
But still his soul was sad,
And sobbed at evening prayer.

Be patient, Baby dear,
That silver rim will grow,
And through the shadows drear
The full moon-flower will blow.

Be patient, Baby dear,
In darkness learn to sing,
And shadows that you fear
Shall swiftly take to wing.

A HARP OF THE HEART

HEART OF MY HEART.

Heart of my heart, I love you;
Soul of my soul I do,
Fair as the stars above you,
Pure as the pearly dew;
Your smile is like the morning,
Your voice like evening bells,
Your eyes are more adorning
Than bloom of woodland dells.

*Heart of my heart, I love you;
Soul of my soul, I do,
Fair as the stars above you,
Pure as the pearly dew.*

Out in the woodland straying,
Where sweet wild thrushes sing,
Or in the meadows Maying,
Heart to heart we cling;
Light of my brightest daytime,
Star of my darkest night,
Mate of my youthful playtime,—
Soul of my soul's delight.

*Heart of my heart, I love you;
Soul of my soul, I do,
Fair as the stars above you,
Pure as the pearly dew.*

A HARP OF THE HEART

HUSH-A-BY.

Hush-a-by, Dear,
On my bosom so warm,
Within is the calm,
And without is the storm—
Hush-a-by, hush-a-by, hush-a-by, Dear.

*Hush-a-by, Dear,
Thou never need fear,
God's guardian angels are hovering near,
Hush-a-by, hush-a-by, hush-a-by, Dear.*

Hush-a-by, Dear,
The musical rain
Is singing to thee
The sweetest refrain,—
Hush-a-by, hush-a-by, hush-a-by, Dear.

*Hush-a-by, Dear,
Thou never need fear,
God's guardian angels are hovering near,
Hush-a-by, hush-a-by, hush-a-by, Dear.*

Hush-a-by, Dear,
Our God is our Guest,
Our pillow his arm,
His love is our rest,—
Hush-a-by, hush-a-by, hush-a-by, Dear.

A HARP OF THE HEART

*Hush-a-by, Dear,
Thou never need fear,
God's guardian angels are hovering near,
Hush-a-by, hush-a-by, hush-a-by, Dear.*



THE HOME-BUILDER.

He left the solaces across the sea,
And journeyed to a land afar;
He fled the howling haunts of tyranny,
To follow long the western star;
He found a spot at last he christened Home,
Where toil could rest in love's embrace,
Where children's happy play in evening gloam
Laughed all the wrinkles from his face.

A HARP OF THE HEART

LAD OF MY LOVE.

Lad of my love, as I look in your eyes,
And see in their deeps the blue of the skies,
As I see your quick feet speeding on to the goal,
And hear in your voice the call of the soul,—
I could wish for you peace, but battle must be,
Ere your feet stand unfettered and free;
The buffeting sleet and the blinding snow
O'er your fair face must battling blow,
As on to the goal of strength you go.
Lad of my love, I would save you pain,
But in her hot hands she brings infinite gain;
I would give you the honey, withholding the sting,
Would keep back the thorns as the roses I fling
Dew-christened and fresh to your outstretched
hand,—
But, Lad of my love, it is otherwise planned.

SINGING OUT OF DOORS.

A HARP OF THE HEART

THE ROBIN IN THE RAIN.

Hear the robin in the rain,
Not a note does he complain,
But he fills the storm's refrain
With music of his own.

Drenched and drooped his finest feather,
Yet he sings in stormy weather,
Bird and God are glad together,—
A-singing in the rain.

That seer-songster's vision traces
Trails of light in darkest places,
Pouring through earth's stormy spaces
The solace of his song.



CLOUDS.

The great wide sky is a deep blue sea,
And the twinkling stars are the flecks of foam;
And the shadows of clouds across the lea
Are the shadows of ships that sail for home

Who captains these ships that sail so high,
Who pilots them over the deep sky sea,
Where the wind-waves roll on the rainy sky,
And waft their music down to me.

A HARP OF THE HEART

THE SHEEP SORREL.

O the sheep sorrel bloom,
It is death to my gloom,
When the harp of my heart is unstrung;
O the sheep sorrel pie,
Of the days gone by,
When life was all yearning and young.

It grew at the edge
Of the sheltering hedge,
Or mayhap in grasses concealed;
In the distance I know
It was like a pink snow,—
Bloom drifts on the fringe of the field.

O memories dear,
Bring the glad days near,
When I hunted the sorrel for pie;
Better than berry,
Or apple or cherry,—
Was the sorrel of days gone oy.

A HARP OF THE HEART

NESTING TIME.

Nesting time is come again,
And love is in the air;
Bluebird, robin, lark and wren
Are nesting everywhere;
O love and life are beautiful,
O love and life are sweet;
O love and life are lyrical,
And love makes life complete.



WILD STRAWBERRIES.

In peaceful prairie fields,
One shining summer day,
With bonnets and with hats of straw
The children went to play.

Bright butterflies were out,
On errands sweet intent,
And where they lit with folded wings,
The happy children went.

The balmy summer air,
Enladen with perfume,
Breathed softly over meadow vines
With white and yellow bloom.

A HARP OF THE HEART

These vines of summer grew,
And all their blossoms shed,
But luscious berries graced the stems,
When all the bloom had fled.

Again the children came,
As gleeful as before,
With bonnets and with hats of straw,
And some small baskets bore.

Down on their hands and knees,
With fingers swift and deft,
They plucked the sweet and scarlet fruit,
The beauteous blossoms left.

With ruby lips and palms,
They toiled in happy play,
And ere the sun stood at high noon,
Full baskets bore away.

That day of summer joy,
I never can forget,
The memory like some dewy dream,
With rapture thrills me yet.

Sweet wild strawberry vine,
But yesterday it seems,
When life was fresh as fragrant spring,
And bright with youthful dreams.

The dear playmates are gone,
Who went with me that day,
To pluck the berries sweet and wild,
And frolic by the way.

A HARP OF THE HEART

But memory wanders back,
Under the open sky,
In quest of those glad girls and boys,
Of happy days gone by.

In losses I have found,
Like that frail berry vine,
That though the transient beauty fades,
The ripened fruit is mine.

Though youthful blossoms fall,
Love's luscious fruit is here,
And glad I go with baskets full,
Into life's wider sphere.



FOG.

'Tis a veil on the river,
When the rain's on the wold,
And the drenched leaves shiver
In the wind and the cold.

'Tis a "Maid of the Mist,"
Reluctantly drawn
Aside to be kissed
By the lips of the dawn.

Lift away the fog robes
From the face of the morn,
But leave the dew globes
On her tassels of corn.

A HARP OF THE HEART

THE SMILE OF SPRING.

Hear the whispers on the breeze,
Hear the singing in the trees ;
Hark the babble of the brooks,
Making music in the nooks ;
Singing rain is on the hills,
Dancing bubbles in the rills ;
From their silent beds of sleep
Blue-eyed grasses wake and peep
From the cover of the sod,—
Smiling in the face of God.

A HARP OF THE HEART

ALFALFA.

Ten thousand wells were in a field,
And not a well was dry,
Nor did they any water yield
To thirsty passers-by;
Of purple blooms the walls were built,
With masonry complete,
When summer skies the sunshine spilt,
And filled them full of sweet.

Every well was swung in air,
And each was blossom-bound,
Unnumbered pilgrims tarried there,
On that fair flowery ground;
O'er the field flew butterflies,
Like floating flakes of snow,
Wafted down from winter skies,
So soft and still and slow.

In that alfalfa field I heard
The serenade of bees,
When vagrant breezes blossoms stirred,
Like trembling organ keys;
I read the mystic meadow rune,
Ensphered with rare perfume,
And heard the lark's love-lute of June
Trill o'er alfalfa bloom.

A HARP OF THE HEART

THE WIND.

Wandering winds moaned through the trees,
Like serried sobs of restless seas;
And tree boughs swaying low and wide,
Groped in quest of days that died,
Murmuring soft and whispering low,
Mournful speech of midnight woe,—
“Farewell, Summer, long farewell.”

Solemn shadows softly fall,
Lying like some funeral pall,
On dead leaves and dying grass,
Where the winds are saying mass;
Moving noiseless, cold and dim,
Shadow phantoms gaunt and grim
Bow sweet Summer, “Long farewell.”

From the drifted leaves emerge
Cricket cries of autumn’s dirge,
And dismantled treetops quiver,
Like long reeds in rushing river,
While the winds ’mid shadows blow,
Half articulate with woe,
And long-drawn sobs, “Fare-well, fare-well.”

A HARP OF THE HEART

THE GRASS.

There are sunbeams in the grass,
Greeting shadows as they pass,
Shade and shine alternate quiver,
Like the moonlight on the river,—

 Oh, the glimmer of the grass.

There are gardens in the grass,
Things abloom in tangled mass,
Smiling summer breathes around,
Tang and odor of the ground,—

 Through the fragrance of the grass.

Little homes are in the grasses,
Dewdrops are the looking-glasses,
Tiny leaves are baby pillows,—
Softer than the pussy willows,—

 Little pillows in the grass.

Bare-foot boys were in the grass,
But they're gone away, alas,
Down the dim and distant days,
Hushed the prattle of their plays,—

 In the lush and lonely grass.

A HARP OF THE HEART.

THE SONG OF THE SICKLE.

The odors sweet,
Of the yellow wheat,
Are afloat on the morning air;
And the sickle's trill
O'er vale and hill
Makes music everywhere.

There's health and bliss
In the morning's kiss,
And the pulses throb and throng;
While music floats
O'er silver oats,
Where sounds the sickle's song.

The sickle's song
I would prolong,
Till war songs hush and die,—
Till peace of mind
All men shall find
Under the harvest sky.

A HARP OF THE HEART

THE WILD ROSE.

Sweet wild rose among the grasses,
Playing with each breeze that passes,
On thy soft and fragrant breast
Pilgrim bees delight to rest;
Thy pink lips and virgin tresses
Hold more beauty than man guesses,
And there come with thy glad kisses
To my heart a thousand blisses;
Careless beauty in the sod,
Blooming at the feet of God,
Christened with the crystal dew,
Angels must have tinted you;
Bridal beauty of the lea,—
Come away and live with me.

A HARP OF THE HEART

SWEET WILLIAM.

It was in the April days,
When the thrushes sang their lays,
That we searched the blooming woodland with the
bees;
And Sweet William graced the ground,
Shedding fragrance all around,
While the sunlight sifted through the budding
trees.

Lips of lavender and pink,
Eagerly the sunshine drink,
While the summer air a luscious sweetness spills
Over grass and leafy tree,
Over flower, bird, and bee,—
Till summer fragrance every blooming beaker fills.



THE PRAIRIE PETUNIA.

Prairie petunia of lavender hue,
Many a summer have I seen you,
Fringing the edge of a country lane,
Or showing your bloom on the grass-grown plain;
So frail is your flower a butterfly's wings
Could buffet your petals to beautiful strings.

A HARP OF THE HEART

THE SWINGING LAMPS OF DAWN.

Near the threshold of my home,
A cunning foe had strayed,
And on a rose tree in the loam,
A wondrous thing he made;
Under cover of the night
He built a silken ginn,
And at the dawn of morning light
Bade all the homeless in.

His shining cords were stretched with skill,
And woven with such grace,
That none would dream he meant to kill,
In such a royal place;
The beauty of his bright bazar
No one could ever fear;
Its mirrors caught the morning star,
That twinkled crystal clear.

The swinging lamps were globes of dew,
Enkindled by the dawn,
And when the morning breezes blew
Across the lighted lawn,
The glowing lamps swung to and fro,
Delighting every eye,
Till dressed in gowns of light aglow
Was every flower and fly.

A HARP OF THE HEART

But when the lights began to wane,
As sea tides slowly ebb,
I heard the plaintive notes of pain
That issued from a web;
And as my cautious feet drew nigh,
I heard the dying song
Of one bewildered foolish fly
That watched the web too long.



RAIN.

Music raining on the roof,
Charming all my soul aloof
From the worry of the world as you fall;
Merry dancing on the eaves,
Like the waltzing of the leaves,
Holds my heart a captive caught in music's thrall.

From the cooling clouds you come,
With your lullaby and hum,
Chasing far away the haunting ghosts of fears;
Then the yearning earth you rob
Of her dismal desert sob,
And you sow my soul with smiles instead of tears.

A HARP OF THE HEART

FALLING LEAVES.

When the summer's tale is told,
Silently they slip their hold,
Like softly falling flakes of gold;
And shivering trees complain with cold,
In sobs subdued,—“We're growing old.”



THE OLD WORLD.

Upbreathed from the soil is the old world's breath,
Wooing young life from the slumber of death;
Calling the violets up from the mold,
And awaking the grasses asleep in the wold;
The curtains of night with the sunbeams are pinned
Back from the windows of dawn, and the wind
Carries the fragrance of bloom everywhere,—
Be still! the Old World's at morning prayer.

SONGS OF HOMELAND.

A HARP OF THE HEART

LINCOLN.

From want and poverty he leaps,
As if from dreaming trance,
And climbs with steady steps the steeps
That challenge his advance;
Truth-girt he stands serene and strong,
Where battle bugles blare,
And with the right subdues the wrong,—
Divinely brave to dare.

Our common flesh and blood was he,
Earth-born, but Heaven-sent
To bring the people's jubilee,
With love's disarmament;
Almighty power had girded him
With undefeated right,
And when our skies with war went dim,
God's chieftain won the fight.

A HARP OF THE HEART

BROTHERHOOD.

Let liberty and light ensphere the world,
And fetters from all human captives fall;
Let velvet palms with shekels full enclose
The caloused hands outstretched from forge and
field;
Let rich and poor together meet as one,
On love's broad base—one world-wide Brother-
hood;
To boundless rule the Truth has right;—make
room,
Ye crumbling thrones of error's sway, give place,
Truth's firm footfall rings round the world to-day.



FREEDOM.

White Goddess, spread thy snowy wings
O'er all thy sons of toil,
While Truth her Titan hammer swings,
Thy foe's red hands to foil.

Let rich and poor beneath thy smile
Work out a nation's task;
Let no dark deeds thy hands defile,
Nor vice thy visage mask.

Let hurtling shafts of thunder leap
From clouds of righteous wrath,
Let storms of justice swiftly sweep
Death's red hand from thy path.

A HARP OF THE HEART

WASHINGTON.

Devoted to country, to man and to God,
He arose in his might to shiver the rod
That oppressed his brothers with burden and thrall;
As a patriot brave he dared to let fall
The swift sword of right on the land and the sea,
Till the foe was subdued and the nation was free.
A hero in war, but a maker of peace,
His name and his fame shall forever increase,
Till freedom's bright banner with colors unfurled
Shall wave in her glory all over the world.



JUDGMENT.

From darkling skies the Spirit swept,
With winnowing wings of light,
On sea and land He firmly stepped,
And called across the night;
Affrighted cravens crept away,
To hide them from the glare,
And startled at the sudden day,
Beastlike they sought the lair.

The great good Guardian of the race
Has come to claim His own,
And only right the facts can face,
Or dare to stand alone;

A HARP OF THE HEART

The Overseer to judgment comes,
Umpire of the soul;
Nor can men bribe Him with the crumbs
Of any earthly dole.

Through haunts of shame and marts of trade,
Like judgment thunder peals
A voice that makes all vice afraid,
And honest worth reveals;
The high Historian of mankind,
Impartial as the light,
Opens the books in every mind,
And reads the records right.

Lucre mongers searched by eyes
That burn through walls of stone,
And bring to light long hidden lies
That knaves have guessed unknown—
Manhood for money they have sold,
And conscience pawned for pelf,
But finding naught save earthly gold,
The man has lost himself.

Alas, for him who, mammon-blind,
Sees not life's larger sky,
Where Truth's untarnished eyes still find
High-lights that never die;
Pity for him who, like the mole,
Burrows in dust and gloom,
Nor knows that God bequeathes the soul
His universe for room.

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